



**THE 2/2ND AUSTRALIAN  
MACHINE GUN BATTALION  
ASSOCIATION**

**MUZZLE BLAST**



*[www.2nd2ndmachinegunbn.com](http://www.2nd2ndmachinegunbn.com)  
[muzzleblast22@gmail.com](mailto:muzzleblast22@gmail.com)*



## 2/2ND AUST MG BN ASSOCIATION

**President:** Ron Myers Ph: 9983 1919  
52/28 Currugul Rd, Nth Turramurra, 2074

**Immediate Past President:** Adrian Simpson Ph: 9878 0525  
201/153 Epping Rd, Marsfield, 2122

**Vice President:** Denis Riley [denriley@hotmail.com](mailto:denriley@hotmail.com) Ph: 9659 6863  
17 Lisa Crescent, Castle Hill, 2154  
Barry Izzard Ph: 9672 7914  
6 Sutton Street, Blacktown, 2148

**Treasurer:** Denis Riley Ph: 9659 6863  
17 Lisa Crescent, Castle Hill, 2154

**Editor:** Lindy Gyles [muzzleblast22@gmail.com](mailto:muzzleblast22@gmail.com) Ph: 94981843  
22 Browns Road, Gordon NSW 2072

**Editorial Assistant:** Adrian Simpson

**Joint Secretaries:** Helen Callaghan Ph: 98041297  
34 Denistone Road, Eastwood, 2122  
Denise Herman Ph: 9489 9707  
74 Roland Avenue, Wahroonga, 20741

**Minute Secretary:** Denise Herman and Helen Callaghan

**Committee:** Bill Harley, Bob Fitzsimmons, Michele Lavan, Brendan Jack,  
Helen Callaghan, Jason Symon, Lindy Gyles

**Hon. Life Members:** Ron Myers, Adrian Simpson, Dave Martin,  
Denis Riley, Di Symon

**Hon. Member:** Ralph Short

### **Deceased Hon. Life Members:**

Charles Armitage, John Boughton, Hugh Brown, Ron Bruncker,  
John Cockram, Jim Cuddihy, Clyde Davy, Jim Dods,  
Gerry Ferguson, Charles Gold, Nev Green, Norm Ihlein,  
John Kenyon, Frank Lavan, Ian Mills, Les Reid, Mick Riley,  
Bok Rowe, Keith Sloss, Reg Somerville, Lon Villiers, Wes Ward

COMMITTEE REPORT



*To Members of the Machine Gunner Family  
we hope that Peace, Happiness and Wellbeing  
are Yours at Christmas  
and throughout The New Year*

*We look forward to hearing from you  
and sharing with you in 2012*



**2/2<sup>nd</sup> Australian Machine Gun Battalion Association**  
**Minutes General Meeting No. 66**  
**Roseville Memorial Club**  
**Pacific Highway Roseville**  
**November 26<sup>th</sup> 2011**

**PRESENT**

Ron Myers            Barry Izzard  
Adrian Simpson     Denise Herman  
Bob Fitzsimmons   Kristy Hague  
Di Symon            Rachel Izzard  
Helen Callaghan    Sally Butcher

**APOLOGIES**

Bill Harley            Lindy Gyles  
Denis Riley           Michele Lavan  
Brendan Jack  
Jason Symon

The meeting opened with a minutes silence in remembrance of departed comrades.

Minutes from the last General Meeting held November 27<sup>th</sup> 2010 were read by Di Symon.

Accepted by            Bob Fitzsimmons  
Seconded by            Barry Izzard

The meeting opened with Ron Myers welcoming the guests Kristy Hague, Rachel Izzard with a special welcome to Sally Butcher.

Treasurer's Report was prepared by the Hon. Denis Riley, presented by Barry Izzard and moved to be accepted by Di Symon.

Accepted by            Adrian Simpson  
Seconded by            Helen Callaghan

Election of office bearers was held with the following positions being unanimous.

President:                                  Ron Myers  
Immediate Past President:            Adrian Simpson  
Vice Presidents:                        Denis Riley & Barry Izzard  
Treasurer:                                Denis Riley  
Minute Secretaries:                    Denise Herman & Helen Callaghan  
Editor:                                      Lindy Gyles  
Committee: Bob Fitzsimmons, Bill Harley, Michele Lavan, Brendan Jack,  
Jason Symon, Di Symon

*\*The next meeting is planned for January 28th, Roseville memorial Club at 11.30 am*

*\*Subscriptions of \$20 are due annually on July 1st. They can be paid by cheque sent to the treasurer, Denis Riley or by direct deposit .*

*Act name: [2/2 Machine Gun Battalion BSB 032123 Act No 130610](#).*

## Letters to the Editor

*In November Owen Ihlein wrote:-*

Many thanks for this latest edition of Muzzle Blast.

A few comments in general:

- When I was a kid growing up in Sydney, all phone numbers commenced with two alpha characters – Norm Ihlein’s number was UY 4187. The telephone dial had alpha characters on it.

- In the early years of the Muzzle Blast “newsletter” I helped my Dad (Norm) with the production of the newsletter. He produced and ran off the copies on a jelly pad. I can recall doing the artwork for him for the letterhead – a stylised gunner sitting behind his Vickers, and also a couple of 2/2 Sigs lying prone beside their radio gear. Unfortunately, I don’t have any copies of this work. I do have some copies of wartime Muzzle Blast, 1940/41, as well as the 1988 edition edited by Ron Myers.

- I have good memories of some of the Battalion social activities in the 1950’s. I can recall particularly a “car rally” run sometime in the 50’s which ended at Camden Park Estate out of Sydney. I remember as a young boy feeling quite excited by the event – I was placed at a checkpoint by my Hon Sec Dad (Norm). I think the end point was Camden Park because of the connection with Macarthur-Onslow – the family owned that facility.

- I have fond memories of my Dad with some of his mates, Lon Villiers, Keith Sloss, Chas Armitage, Ian Mills, Johnny Cockram, Mick Riley and others.

- I was in the Army Cadets at school, early 1960’s. One year (I can’t recall which, but probably 1962) I travelled to Singleton (NSW) Army Camp for an NCO Course. The Cadet Camp Commander was Captain Ian Mills. When Ian discovered I was there, he went out of his way to provide encouragement and support – I will never forget that.

- I can recall attending at the New Commodore Hotel one year when a function was held there. I’m not sure how I came to be there. Maybe it was the Battalion Ball, and my folks did not want to leave us kids at home alone? The New Commodore was somewhere in Sydney City, I can remember the building but I can’t help re location.

- I entered National Service in 1967, and recruited into 1 RTB at Kapooka – 3 Platoon, A Company – which happened also to be my Dad’s (Norm’s) Platoon/ Company in 2/2 MG Battalion until he went to HQ.

- Interestingly, my Dad (Norm) did not approve of my involvement in the Army Cadets at school, and he refused to attend my marching out parade at Kapooka following completion of rookie training. He expressed no interest whatever in anything I did as a National Serviceman. I think there was more to his service with 2/2 than he ever let on.

Well done on all the work that you take on for the 2/2.

Cheers

Owen

*\*Please feel free to write to the editor or comment on articles that interest you :*

[muzzleblast22@gmail.com](mailto:muzzleblast22@gmail.com)

## 1940 and the First Battalion Christmas and New Year

In May 1940, Lt-Col David Adie Whitehead, MC, was commissioned to form the 2/2 Australian Machine Gun Battalion, A.I.F

The NSW camp, still being constructed, for training purposes at Cowra was not ready, so on the May 15th, the 'originals' marched into camp at Ingleburn. In September when Cowra camp was finally ready, the NSW companies travelled there by road after farewells, a Battalion Ball and a Ceremonial parade.

[http://www.cowratourism.com.au/Experience\\_Cowra/History/](http://www.cowratourism.com.au/Experience_Cowra/History/)

The QLD companies trained at Redbank in what appears to be a more difficult environment with less 'modern' surroundings and more remote facilities [http://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/residents/healthy\\_lifestyle/waterways/swag/](http://www.ipswich.qld.gov.au/residents/healthy_lifestyle/waterways/swag/).

In November 1940, the battalion was given the news that in December, it would move overseas on 'a famous Atlantic liner' (Muzzle Blast . Six Years of war With The 2/2 Australian Machine Gun battalion) The original date was set as December 21st, but on the 16th December the date was changed at short notice to December 26th. Naturally the timing, being Christmas and the departure changes were significant to the men and their families. It created some disquiet and unrest, particularly as no Christmas leave was "possible". The changes led to a "series of increasingly emotional farewells" (p. 35 Muzzle Blast . Six Years of war With The 2/2 Australian Machine Gun Battalion)

On Christmas Day in Cowra, NSW, Colonel Whitehead joined the men for a special Christmas dinner. In Redbank, QLD Christmas Day was a duty free day. They enjoyed an 'excellent dinner'. The dinners were supplied by the Welfare Auxiliaries (see NOTE) and the officers acted as orderlies during the meal.

On Boxing Day, as planned, the troops were moved to Sydney from both Cowra and Redbank. On the wharf at Pyrmont the following day, they were given their bunk allocation and regulations for travel on board the

HMT Aquitania. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS\\_Aquitania](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RMS_Aquitania)

It was a political decision, not popular with Lt-Col Whitehead, that those enlisting in a particular state could only train in that state. This was significant for the Battalion as the men training in QLD could not meet (let alone train with) those from NSW until the point of embarkation or those from other states until overseas, away from Australian soil

On the Aquitania, they sailed through the heads then headed south in convoy with the cruiser HMS Ajax leading the way, the Queen Mary following with the Dominion Monarch, and two minesweepers. The Victorians and South Australians boarded The Mauretania on December 30th, and joined the convoy in the Great Australian Bight. After changing ships in Colombo to less impressive vessels, they sailed towards Egypt. In the Suez Canal at Ismailia, on January 30th they saw enemy action for the first time. It forced them to disembark earlier than planned and travel overland to reach Palestine in February. <http://www.toureygypt.net/ismailia.htm>

[http://maps.google.com.au/maps/myplaces?vpsrc=6&ctz=-660&abauth=5f2b366c:ozfais\\_urkO3DiiACYt\\_FG31TzA&vps=3&ei=a2fpTq2SMlrRmAXu-bGZAw&num=10](http://maps.google.com.au/maps/myplaces?vpsrc=6&ctz=-660&abauth=5f2b366c:ozfais_urkO3DiiACYt_FG31TzA&vps=3&ei=a2fpTq2SMlrRmAXu-bGZAw&num=10)

NOTE: the Work of Women's Auxiliary

*taken from the Muzzle Blast of November 1940*

"The Women's Auxiliary of the 2/2<sup>nd</sup> M.G. Bn. Has been hard at work making, among other things, sports shirts for the men in camp. Several bridge functions have been arranged by members of the committee. Mrs James Kirby, of Beauty Point (located in Mosman, Sydney) had a small but successful party at her home to raise funds for the committee. Miss Minna Bourke held a bridge party at the Carlton ( which became the Carlton Rex Hotel, 56 Castlereagh Street, Sydney) to raise funds for sports equipment, and a goodly sized cheque was sent direct to Cowra. Mrs Hawkins generously gave £10 to help swell the funds, and Miss Violet Rodgers held a very successful concert, the proceeds of which were shared with the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> Field Ambulance.

The committee decided that its Xmas effort should take the form of a Xmas tree for the children of the men of the Battalion. The entertainments committee got busy making jazz caps for the tree, and organised a film afternoon and tea party, which was held in the Shell Theatrette (in Carrington St, now The Menzies Hotel, Sydney <http://www.sydneyarchitecture.com/cbd/cbd4-048.htm>), through the kindness of Mr Nicholson, of the Shell Company. Each guest brought along a toy for the Xmas tree, and the children should have a most enjoyable afternoon sometime in December"

# HIGHLIGHTS OF COWRA

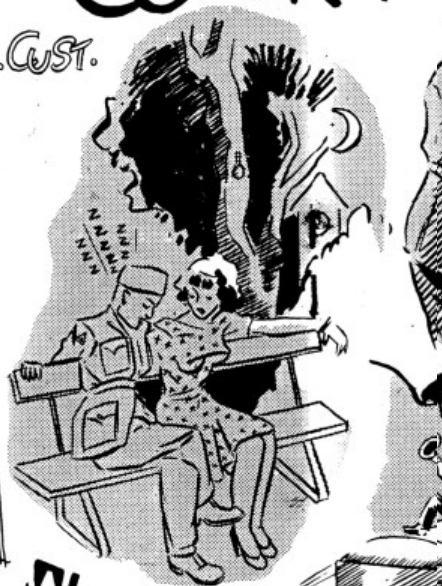
By J. CUST.



**T**HIS IS WHAT OUR CONVOY LOOKED LIKE COMING INTO COWRA



**P**EOPLE WANT TO KNOW IF SOMEBODY STRUCK OIL... BUT IT'S ONLY THE ROADS WE'RE MAKING



**W**E CAN'T HELP IT IF THE GIRLS COMPLAIN THAT WE DO TOO MUCH P.T.



**I**T'S PRETTY COLD HERE IN THE MORNING - BUT WE STILL HAVE OUR CENTRAL EATING

**O**NE OF OUR ENERGETIC PRIVATES HURRYING ON TO PARADE

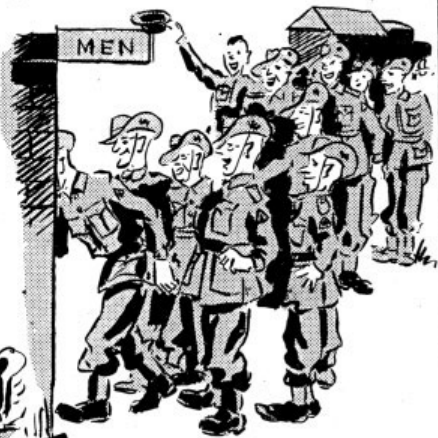


**C**ARRY ON WITH THE SYMB





**W**E CAN ALL GO TO THE DANCE AND IF WE'RE LUCKY - DO ABOUT TWO FEET SIX BEFORE SOMEBODY TAPS YOU



**O**UR PLEASANT MEMORIES OF KATCOMBA AND BLAYNEY -OR THE RELIEF PARTY



**I**T'S A LONG HIKE HOME NOW IF YOU WANT TO GO A.W.L. AND HOW

**T**HEN THERE'S THE JOYS OF NIGHT TRAINING



**T**HE COOK STILL SURPRISES US WITH OUR FAVOURITE DISH "BULLY BEEF"



**A**NYWAY WE CAN STILL CLEAR THE DUST OUT OF OUR EYES WITH A COUPLE OF THESE

BUS - MOVE

*(This piece is taken from the Muzzle Blast of June 1941, reflecting on the year past, the formation of the Battalion and looking to the time ahead. The Author is not listed but there will be some members who have a good idea and hopefully enlighten those of us who don't)*

## **An Anniversary**

“Anniversaries are beacons of remembrance along the pathway of the years. In future days which we are seeking to make secure there will be many anniversaries for us to remember, days of memories linked inextricably with our lives. But this May of 1941 we celebrated our first—the forming of the Battalion.

It was on May 1 of last year that the 2/2 Machine Gun Battalion came into being, though it was a fortnight later before the first personnel moved into K block at Ingleburn. Slowly the unit grew about its first nucleus of the Colonel, Capt. Wheatley, Capt. Fischer, Sjt (now Lieut.) Varley, Sjt. Chegwidde, and the others of that little band of “originals” who ate Tom Parker’s cooking in what was to become Officers’ Mess.

Through June and July the battalion continued to grow, as farmers, clerks, tailors, cooks, bootmakers, laborers, barristers, carpenters, bus drivers, bank clerks, accountants, and the men of hundred other occupations who form the A.I.F. were drafted in.

Gradually the tempo of training increased. By the early Spring, when we moved to Cowra, elementary work merged into more advanced training. And as the men found that there was more to soldiering than barrack square drill, their keenness and efficiency grew.

Before us now like a mirage, one moment near at hand, the next fading into the distance, was the prospect of embarkation. Then, as the year drew to a close we sailed away on the great adventure. The mirage had become a sudden reality.

Long days at sea, with monotony broken by strange sights and experiences, and then Palestine. On the fringe of the war zone we trained hard, to fit ourselves for the time when the call would come to take our places in the battle. And in our spare time we explored to the full the ancient and modern cities of the Holy Land.

With the coming of the old world Spring the tide of war swept down through the Balkans, and curled back towards Egypt. At last came the call for which the Battalion had prepared itself through a year of training. In the days to come we will need all the courage, determination and fortitude that is the legacy of our race, but we shall win through to that great prospect of peace which only the victory of our arms will bring”

**VALE**

**John 'Curley' Frederick Kirton**

**NX 175884**

1925—2011



John enlisted in the Citizen Military Force when he was just 17 and 4 months old. Six months later he transferred to the Australian Imperial Force and the 1st Australian Machine Gun Training Battalion, in September 1943

In 1944 when the Battalion returned to Australia from New Guinea, reinforcements were urgently needed and this was when John joined the 2/2nd. Now aged 18, he trained with them in the Atherton tableland as preparation for jungle warfare and Borneo. He was subsequently deployed with them to Morotai seeing action at Tarakan Island, Brunei Bay and Labuan Island

When the Battalion was repatriated to Australia, and disbanded in Feb 1946. John was transferred another battalion, the 29/46th, until discharge in June of the same year.

John was an active member of at the RSL sub-Branch Chester Hill, attending a meeting there just the day before he died.

They describe him as “typical of the Servicemen of the time, in that he did not speak greatly about his life in the Service, but he was immensely proud of his Battalion and its Association. He always shared with us information about what the Association was doing, and always had a badge or snippet from a newspaper or their newsletter to show to all who he could bail up at the time”

*We are grateful to Steven Kirton, John's son, and the Bass Hill RSL Sub Branch for their contribution to his tribute*

## LAST POST

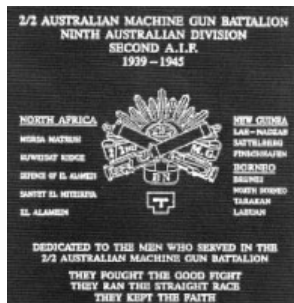
It is with sincere regret that we report the passing of

**Nell Riley** (5/11/2011) Wife of Mick , Mother of the Vice President, Treasurer

**Audrey Somerville** (25/10/2011) Wife of Reg

To their families and friends, members of the Association extend deepest sympathy

*'They fought the good fight,  
They ran the straight race,  
They kept the Faith'*



**LEST WE FORGET**

### ODE

*(For The Fallen By Laurance Binyon)*

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,  
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow,  
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted,  
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them